

## Species of Concern

NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service

**Speckled hind**  
*Epinepheuls drummondhayi*



Photo credit: US Geological Survey.

### KEY INFORMATION

#### Area of Concern

Western Atlantic: South Atlantic and the Gulf of Mexico.

**Year Identified as “Species of Concern”**  
1997

#### Factors for Decline

- Recreational fishing
- Bycatch

#### Conservation Designations

IUCN: Critically Endangered  
American Fisheries Society: Endangered

### Current Status:

#### **Demographic and Genetic Diversity Concerns:**

There is a paucity of data for this species: the stock structure is not characterized, population size is unknown and much of their life history has not been thoroughly investigated. However, it is believed that there has been a population decline since.

#### **Existing Protections and Conservation Actions:**

Both recreational and commercial fisheries for speckled hind are currently regulated in the south Atlantic; the South Atlantic Fisheries Management Council considers the species as **overfished** and undergoing **overfishing**. In the Gulf of Mexico commercial fishery, there are no possession limits for the species for federally permitted reef fish vessels, and it is managed under the Deep-water grouper commercial quota. The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council classifies the status of speckled hind as “unknown.”



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### Brief Species Description:

Speckled hind derive their name from the multitude of tiny white spots that cover their reddish-brown head, body and fins. Juvenile specimens tend to have yellow body color with white spots (Ross 1988). Speckled hinds are deep-water groupers: adults inhabit offshore rocky bottoms in depths of 80 to 1300 feet (25 to 400 m) but are most common between 200 and 400 feet (60 and 120 m). Preferred habitats include high- and low-profile hard bottoms. Juveniles occur in shallower water (SAFMC 2005). Speckled hind are protogynous hermaphrodites (change sex from female to male); females mature at 4 or 5 years of age and 18 to 24 inches (45-60 cm) TL. Spawning occurs from July to September in spawning aggregations (SAFMC 2005). Maximum size is about 43 inches (110 cm) TL and maximum weight is 66 pounds (30 kg). Maximum age is at least 25 years (Matheson and Huntsman 1984). Prey items, which can be engulfed whole, include fishes, crabs, shrimps, lobsters, and mollusks, including squids.

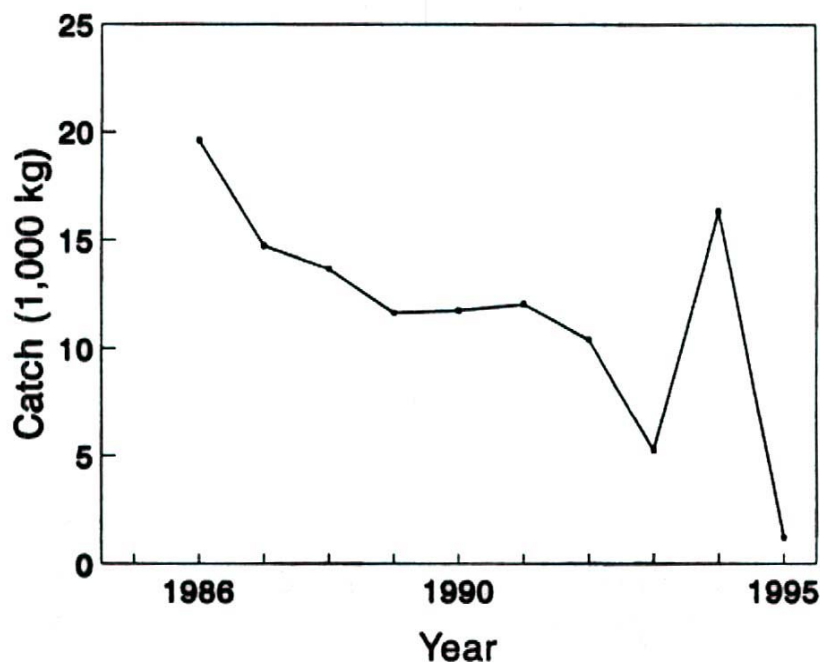


Figure 1. Speckled hind catch (kg), all fisheries combined (Parker and Mays 1998).

### Contact Information

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### References:

- Matheson, R.H. III and G.R. Huntsman. 1984. Trans. Am. Fish. Soc. 113:607.
- Parker, R.O., Jr. and R.W. Mays. 1998. NOAA Technical Report NMFS 138.
- Ross, S.W. 1988. Copeia 1988: 780.
- SAFMC (South Atlantic Fishery Management Council). 2005. Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation report for the snapper grouper fishery of the south Atlantic, November 18, 2005.